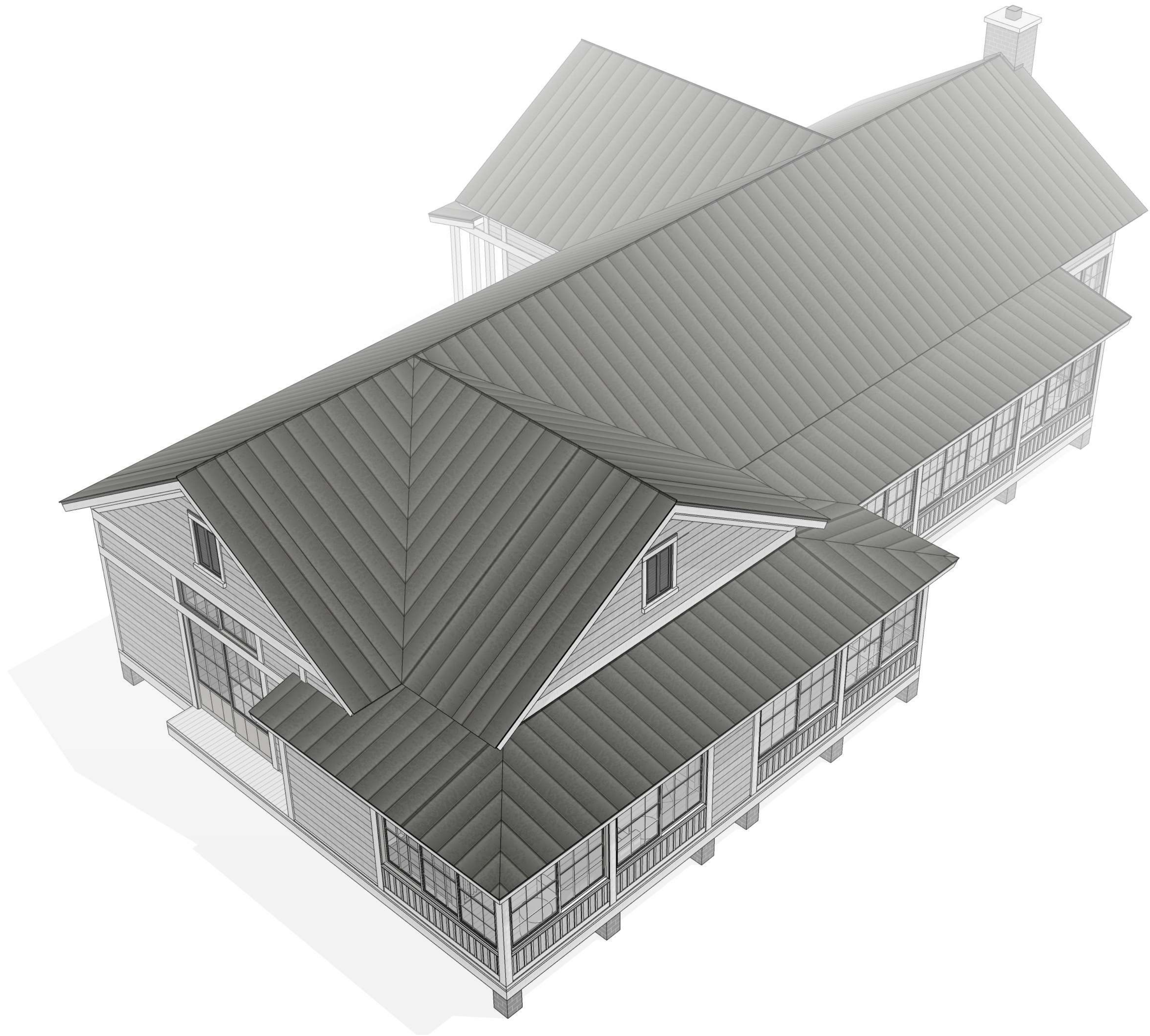
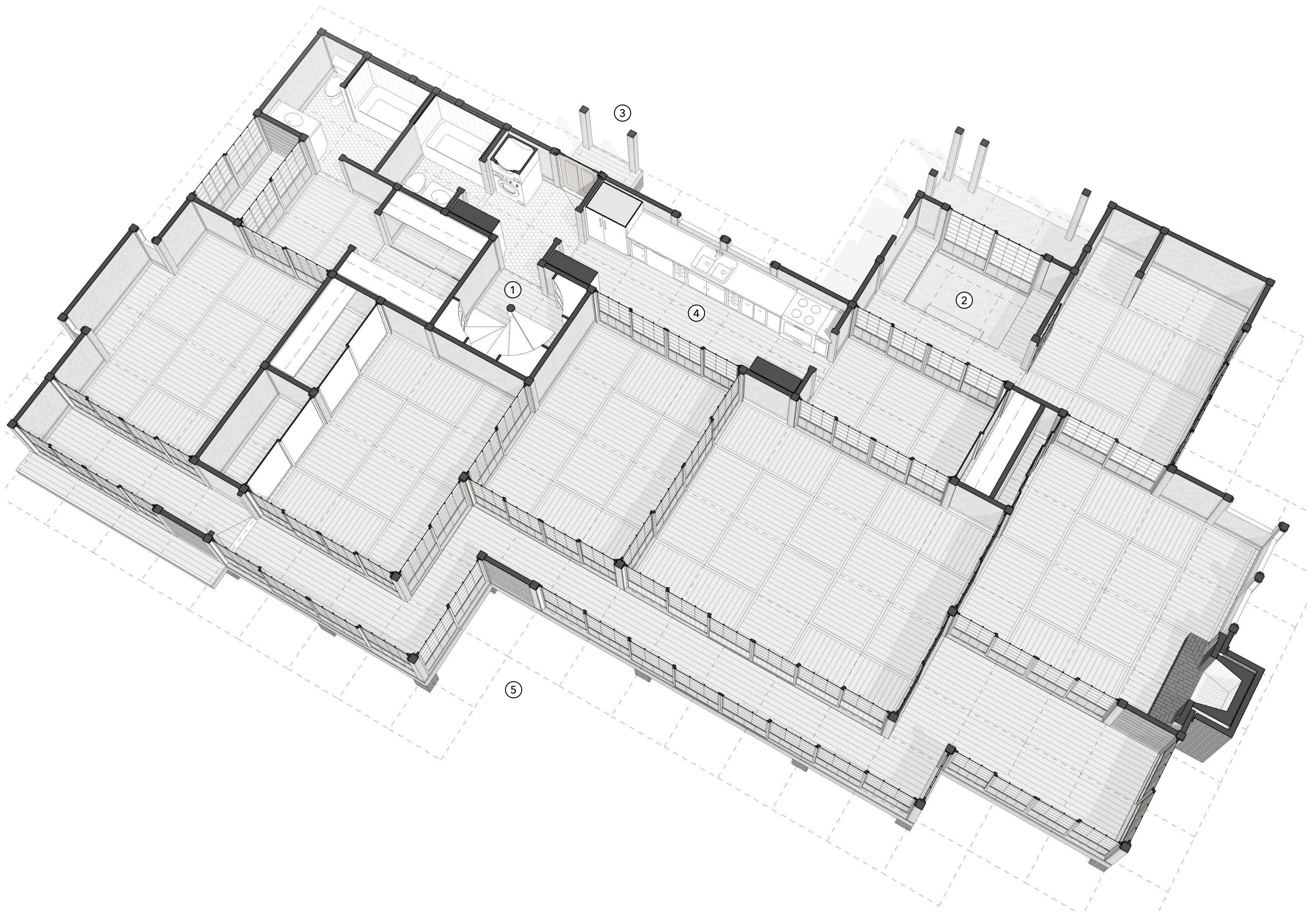




What can we learn from other traditions? How can we adopt the best ideas? How can we make homes more future-proof, appealing to a wider variety of people? I'm not interested in theorizing. I want to test assumptions, learning by designing. You support lets me experiment with new ideas that can end up in other projects. With a license to fail, I might succeed in ways that are currently unimaginable.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
PROJECT OVERVIEW
A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

This design attempts to fuse the architectural traditions of Japan and America, searching for common ground. Each culture's residences are distinctive, but they also may be compatible. Gaijin means "foreigner" in Japanese. By calling this the Gaijin House, I intend to highlight the influence of Japan but also underscore the way that this fusion of architecture doesn't have a designated place or category.



The first challenge with fusing American and Japanese traditional architecture is to consider how the grid of floor mats ("tatami") organizes rooms. Old homes in Japan had 3'x6' mats, roughly the size of a sleeping pad. The spaces were more flexible, allowing rooms to change function. Because those houses didn't use furniture, it's more of a challenge to adapt such a design to American culture.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE: OPTION A
GRID & STAIRS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

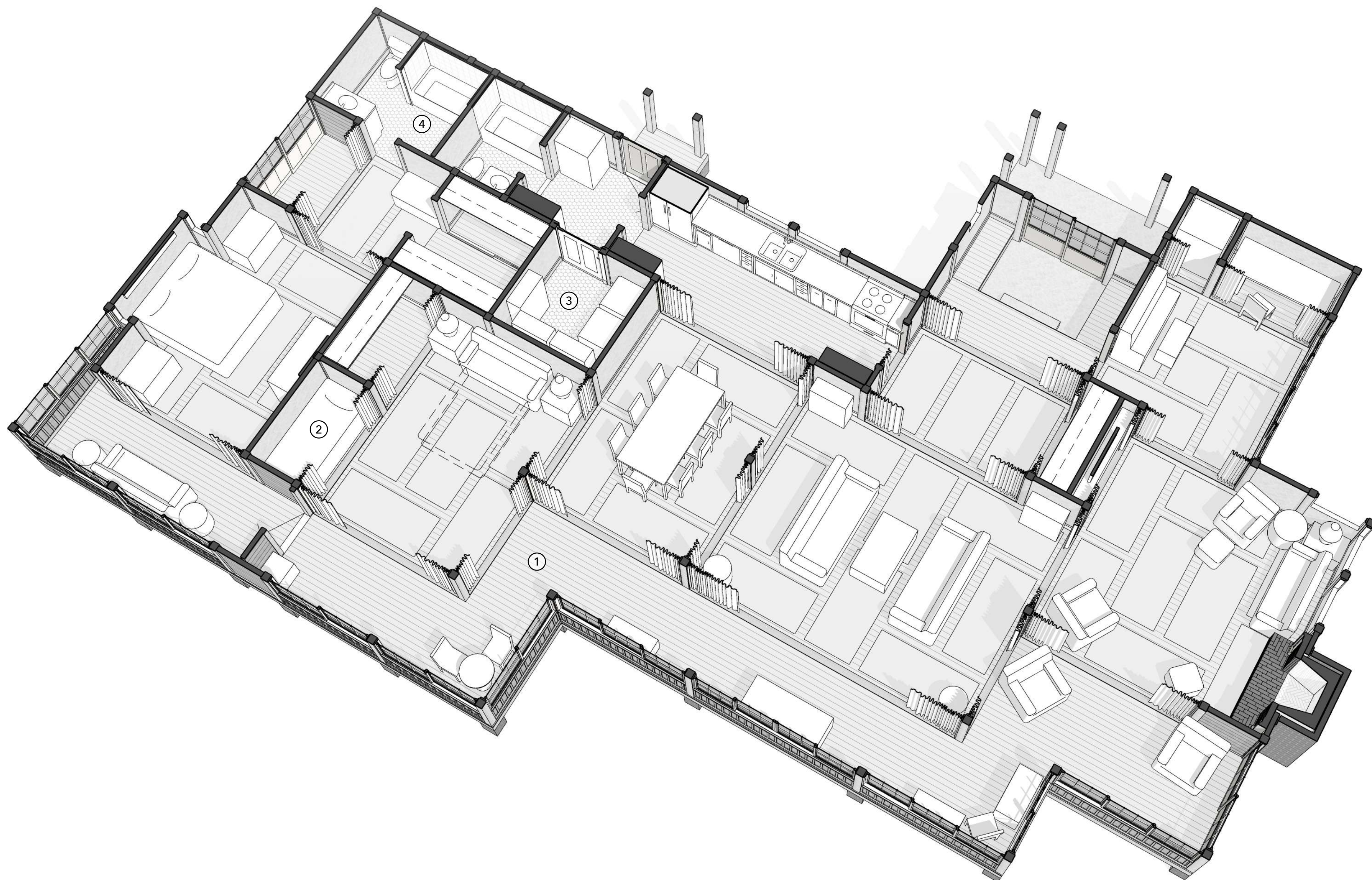
(1) I briefly considered an attic to fill the large roof. It could have a guest suite, storage, and a large workshop. But I axed that idea to keep everything simpler. **(2)** The entry has benches for taking off shoes. **(3)** Building codes don't allow sliding doors for a main entrance. The service door would be the official entry. **(4)** The kitchen can be closed off from the dining. **(5)** A 3'-8" grid proved ideal.



The second challenge in fusing American and Japanese traditional architecture is to consider how furniture is used. It's better to not place the furniture against a sliding panel (called a shoji screen in Japan) because it's made of paper and thin wood strips. Also, that restricts the flow. Shoji can also be made of glass, but then they start getting heavy, possibly requiring sophisticated or expensive hardware.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE: OPTION B
SLIDING PANELS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

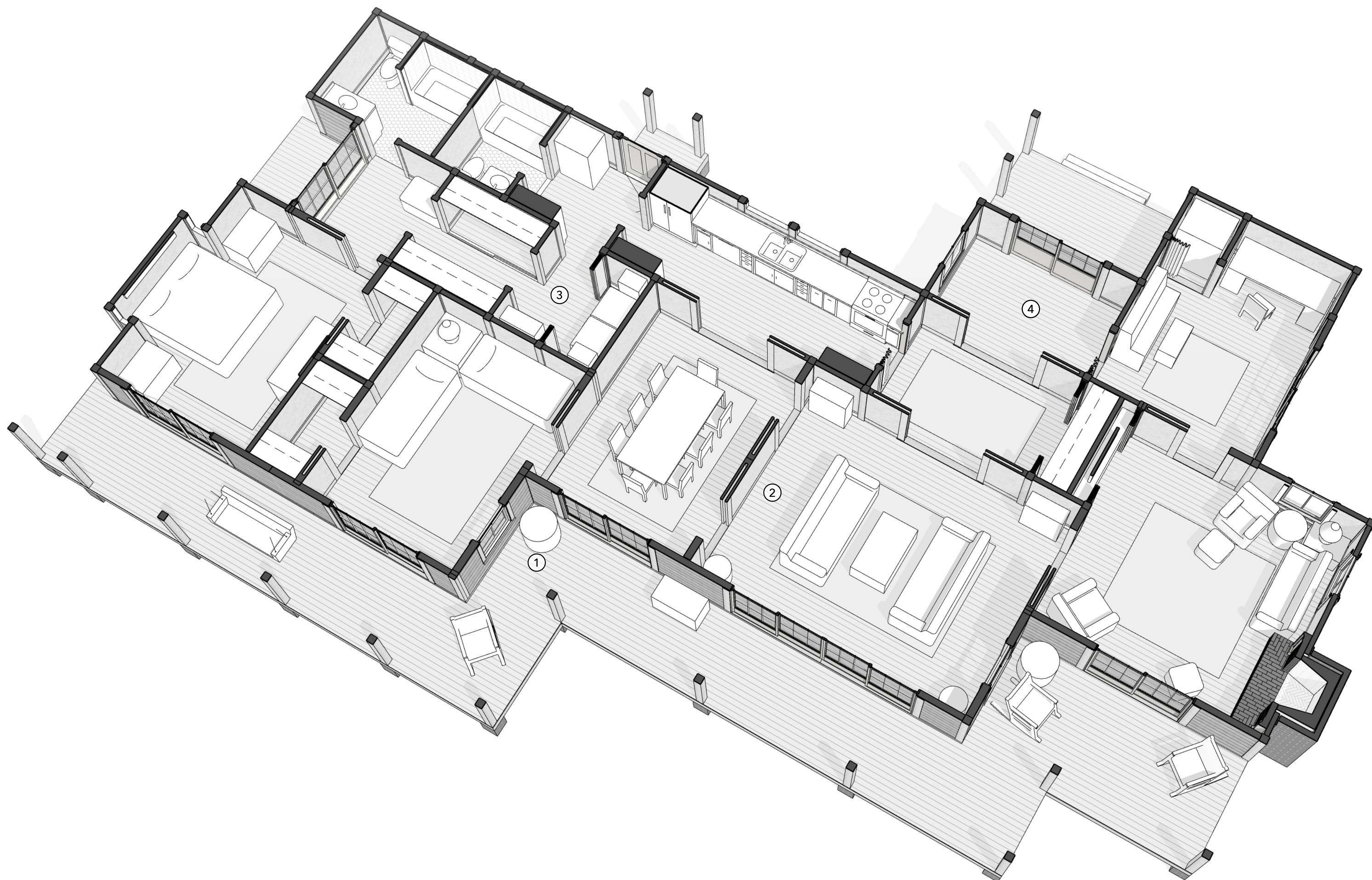
(1) The engawa is like an enclosed porch that is mostly used as a hall. This permits more adaptability for the rooms. **(2)** Localized symmetry, like this axis from the entry through the reception area, gives a processional air. **(3)** The fireplace is decidedly American and is located in the informal living room area. **(4)** This might be a tea room in Japan, but here it could be an office or bedroom.



Instead of sliding shoji panels and thick inset tatami mats, what if it had curtains and area rugs? Here's an exploration of the idea. The hanging curtains could have the same translucent effect that softens and balances interior lighting, and also allows for versatility and personality. Area rugs are less necessary here, but can allude to the proportions and spatial module underlying the room layouts.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE: OPTION C
CURTAINS & RUGS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

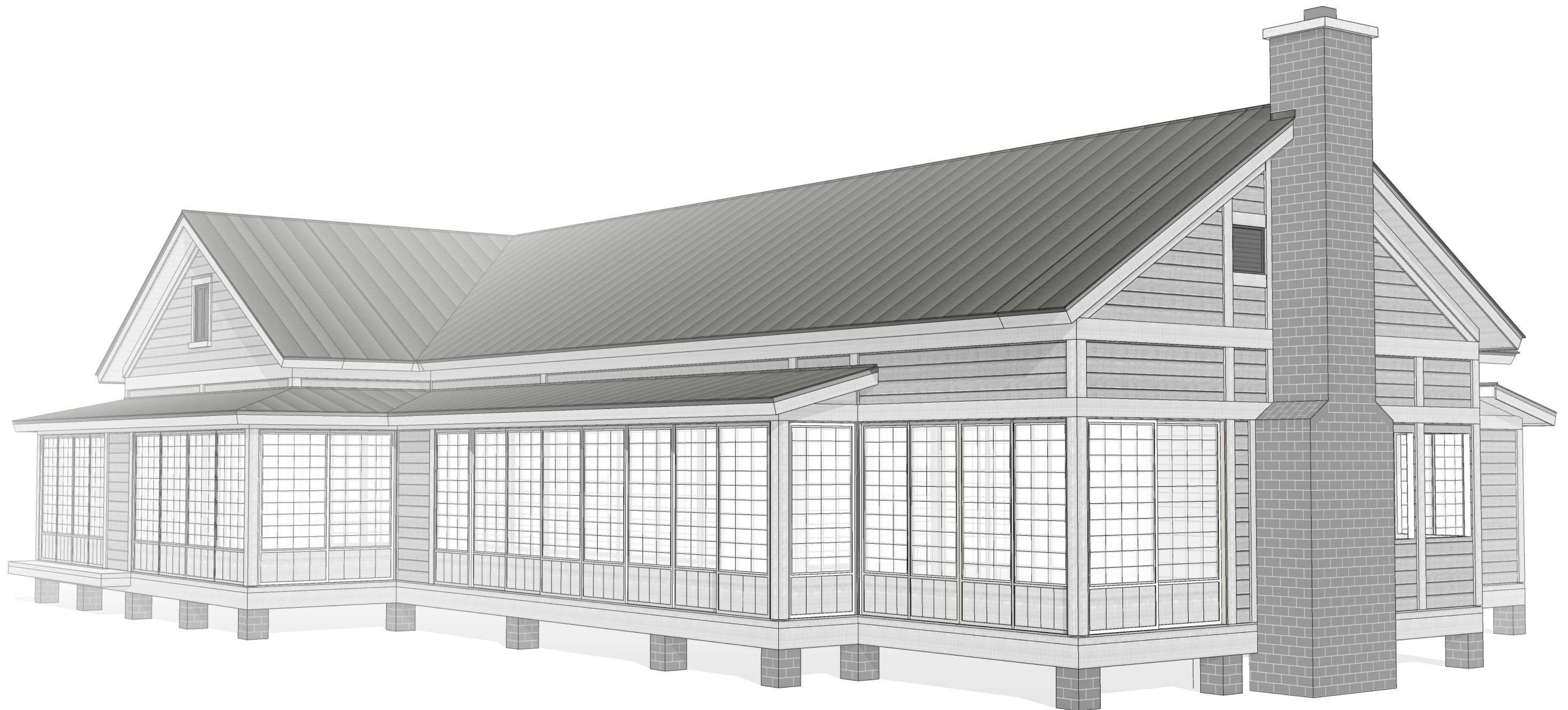
(1) The porch can be enclosed with sliding glass windows. By raising the sills by 2 feet, fewer code requirements would affect the design. **(2)** A bed alcove could make this a temporary guest bedroom, hiding any mess, and opening the room for other functions. **(3)** The main bedroom is accessed from the glass porch, so this space can be a pantry or utility room. **(4)** The plumbing area is concentrated.



In a final step towards morphing a Japanese traditional house into one that would feel at home in America, this plan shows fairly conventional openings, like sliding glass doors, pocket doors, and windows set in apertures. The area rugs are more practical, losing their reference to the tatami mats. And large openings are framed, still allowing functional diversity in the rooms, but also wide views.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE: OPTION D
DOORS & WINDOWS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

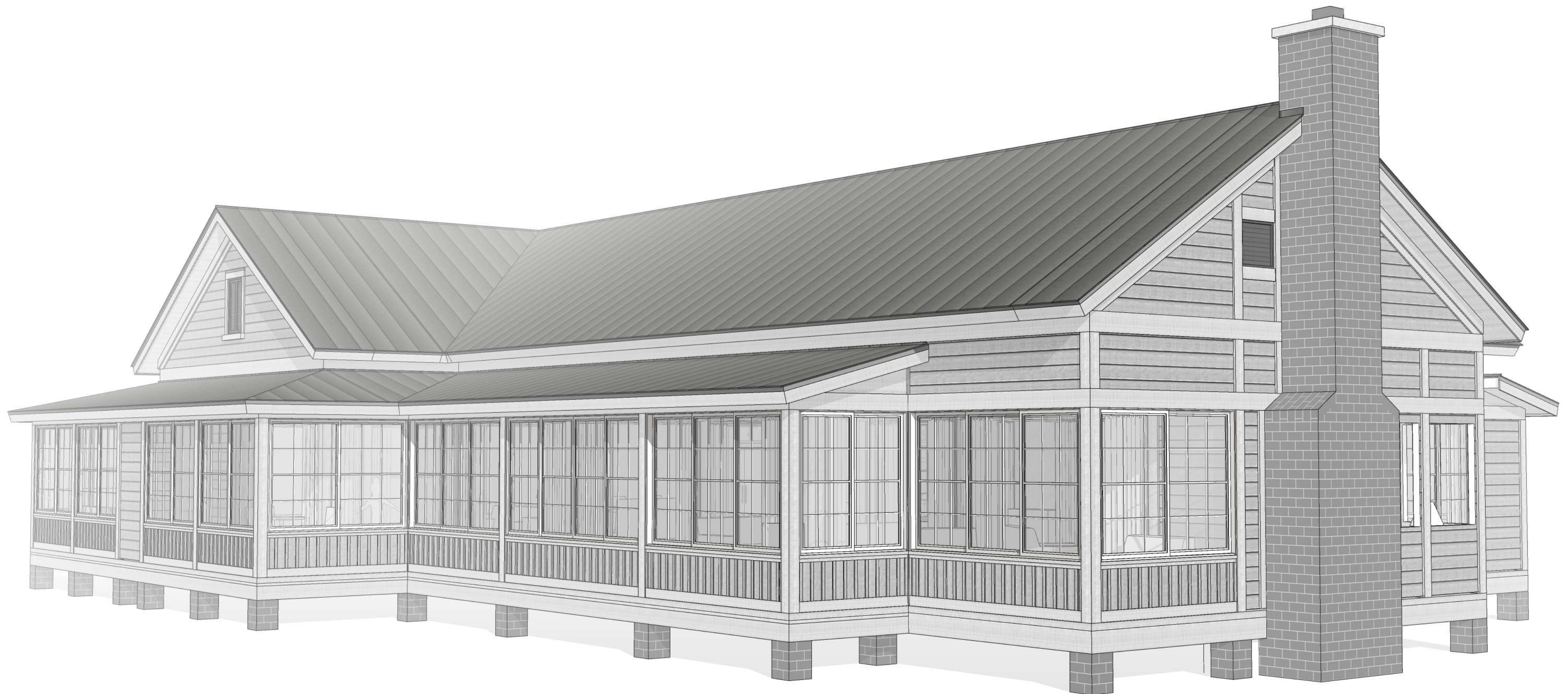
(1) The porch is now completely open. As a wrap-around porch, it still alludes to the Japanese engawa that it is based on. Now it is slightly wider so it can have furniture, and has columns spaced closer together. **(2)** Pocket doors provide more wall area for artwork and furniture. **(3)** The bedroom suite is accessed from the utility hall, maximizing privacy. **(4)** The entry has fewer steps and is spacious.



Here is the main view of options A and B, with the sliding doors and windows. Based on the traditional shoji panels of Japanese architecture, this house is both open and closed, allowing for different degrees of privacy. In North America, the exterior sliding doors would probably have to be built with glass, and the added weight of the assembly might need steel dividers between the glass panes.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
MAIN VIEW (OPT A - B)
A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

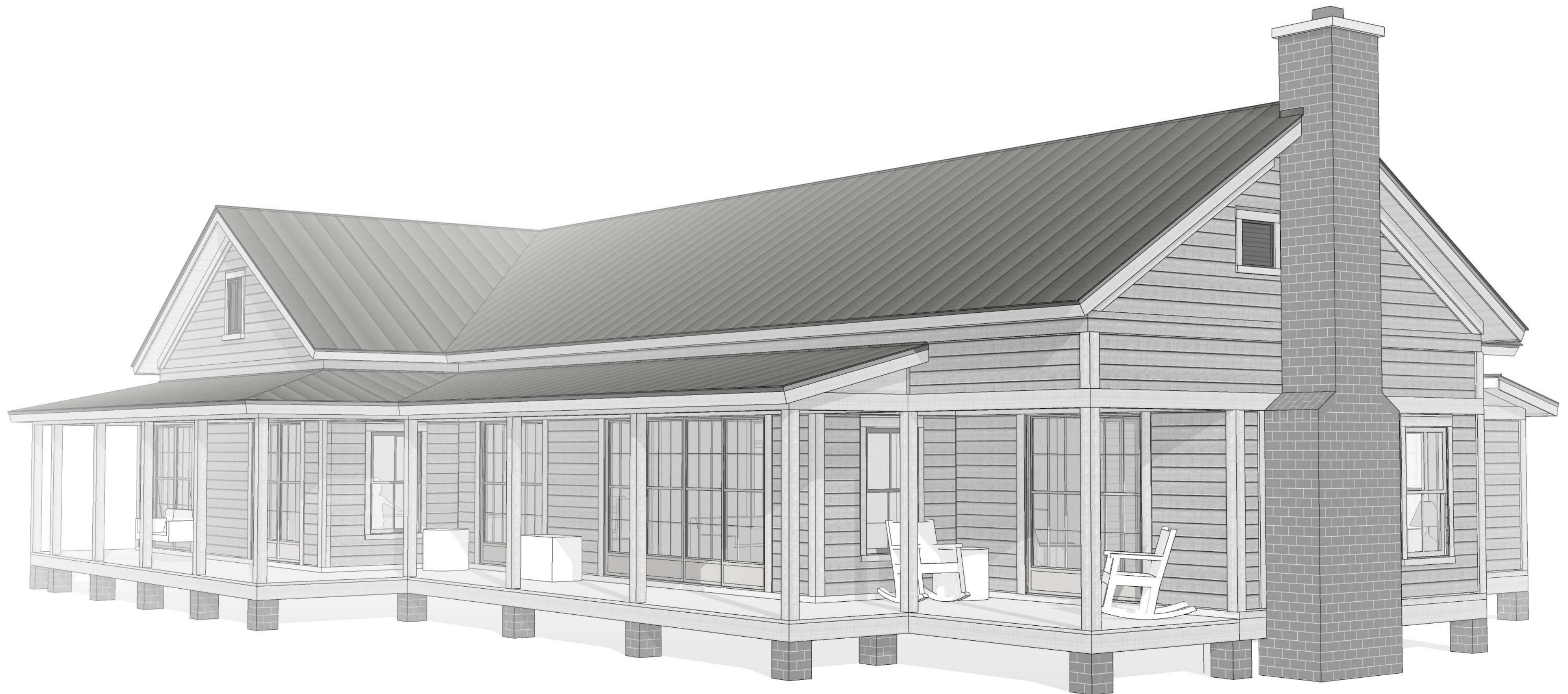
A few code requirements could also get in the way of building this. It's important to call these sliding windows instead of doors, and to keep the floor level close enough to the ground to avoid triggering more restrictions. Usually, a 30-inch drop is the most you can have without a guardrail. The pier foundation is also necessary for the house's floating presence, common in Japanese architecture.



This option enlarges and encloses the porch (called an engawa in Japan). The porch is 50% larger than the floor grid (adding 22 inches to the 44" grid) so the porch can be deep enough for furniture. By enclosing the interior with glass, this design allows for expansive views outward. Instead of pierced openings for the windows and doors, it's an entire wall that can be opened to the world outside.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
MAIN VIEW (OPT C)
A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

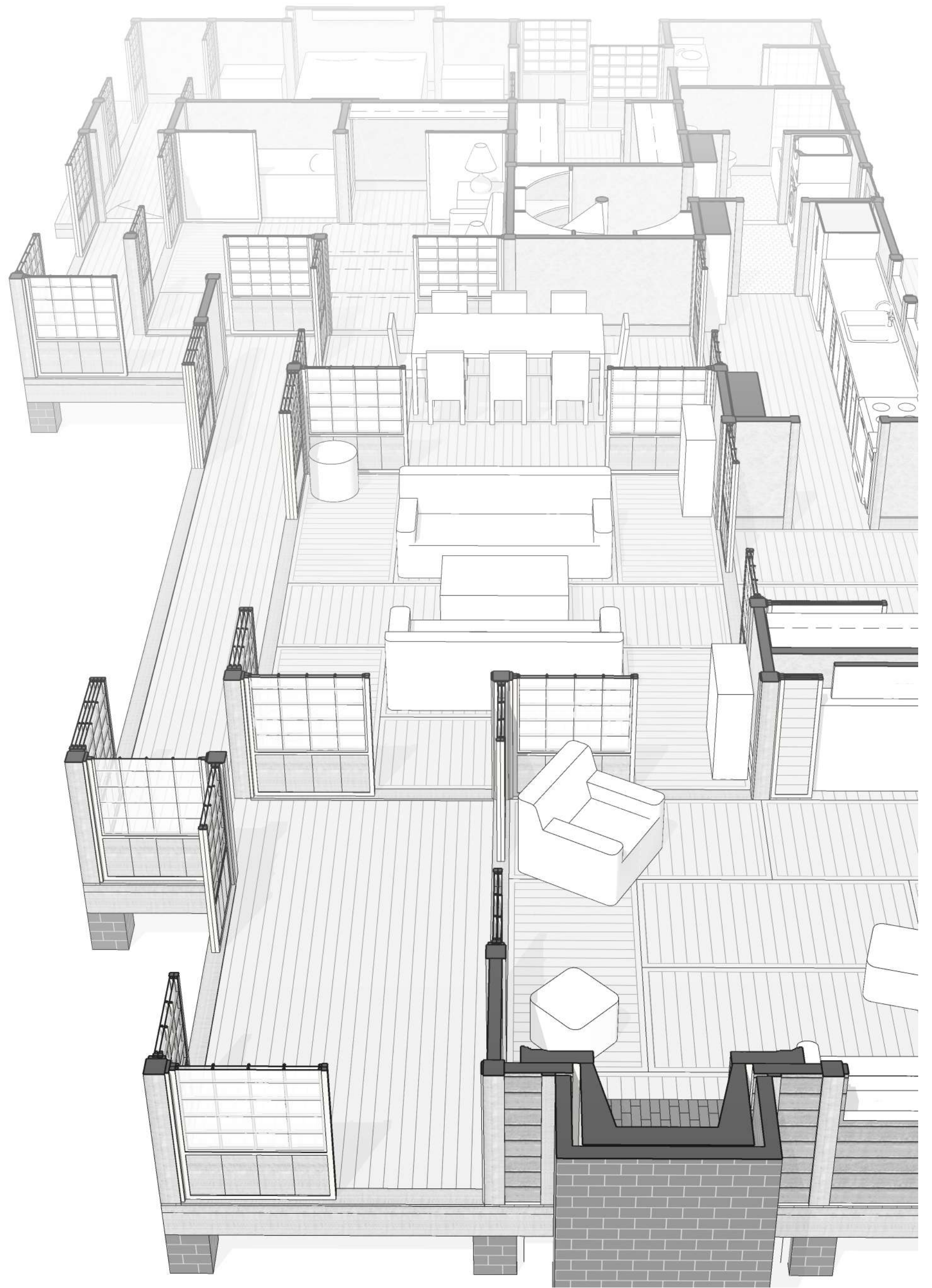
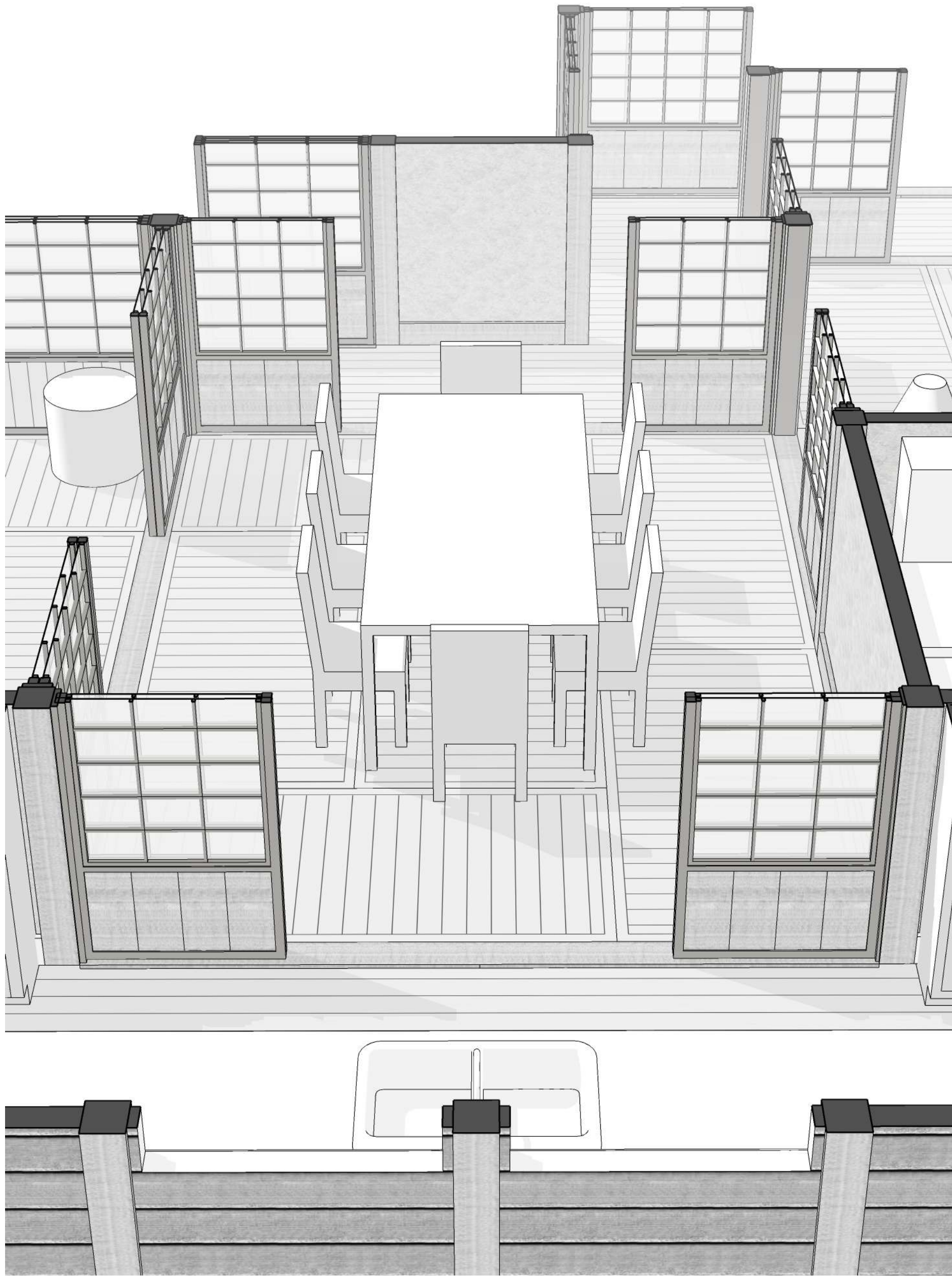
One of the challenges of new old American houses is to balance the need for larger openings, expected in modern buildings, with the smaller windows that are the characteristic expression of old homes. By filling in a porch with windows, it's possible to have both desires. Importantly, this should be the back porch, since enclosed front porches are visually uninviting, and tend to accumulate junk.



Here is the main view with the open porch and the window openings. It's moving far from its Japanese roots but still has much the same proportions. The porch has many sliding glass doors that will be less visible during the day, hiding in the shade. The chimney anchors one of the gable ends, making it hard to have an attic with good daylighting. So it's just a conventional attic with wall vents.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
MAIN VIEW (OPT D)
A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

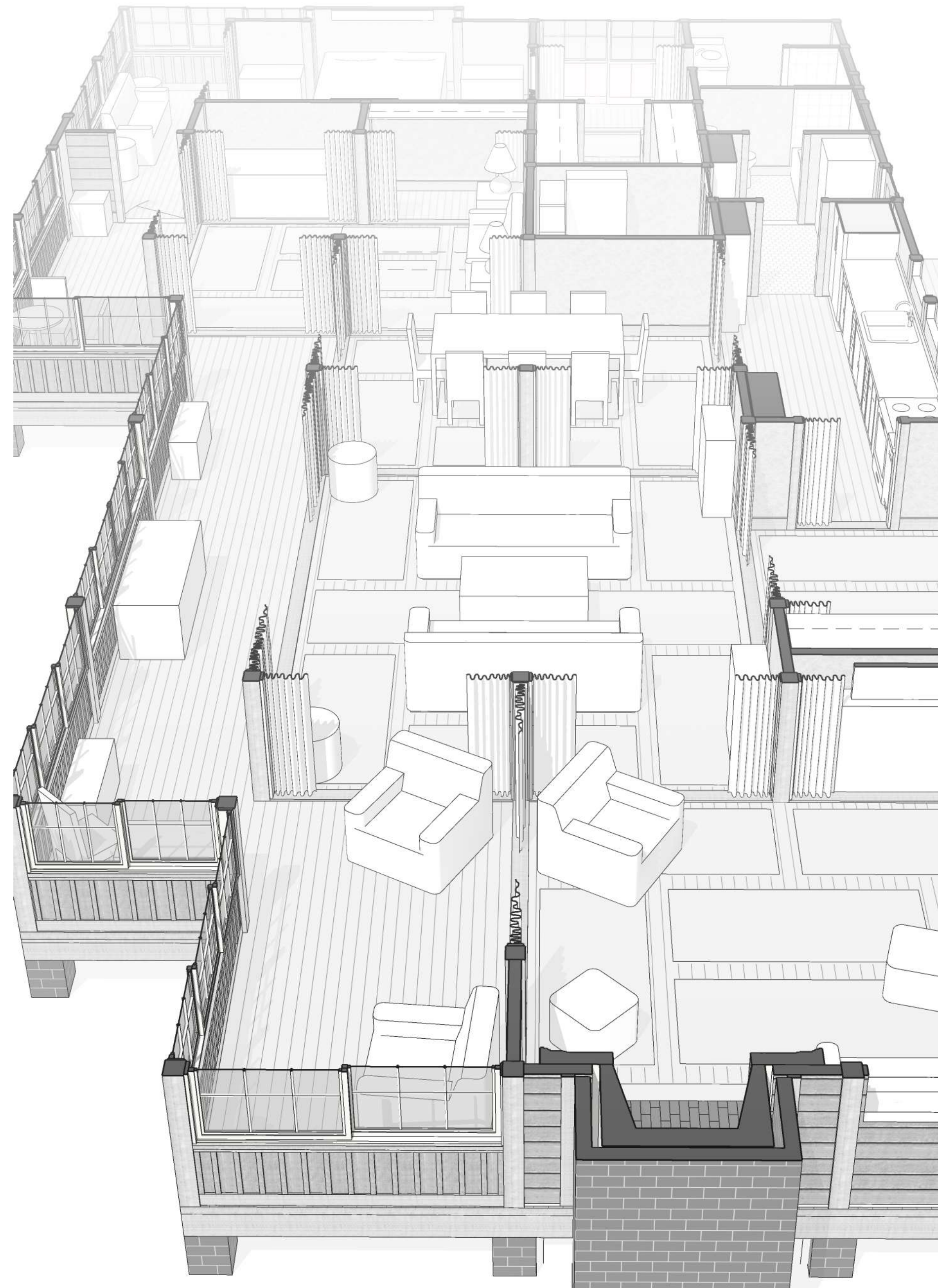
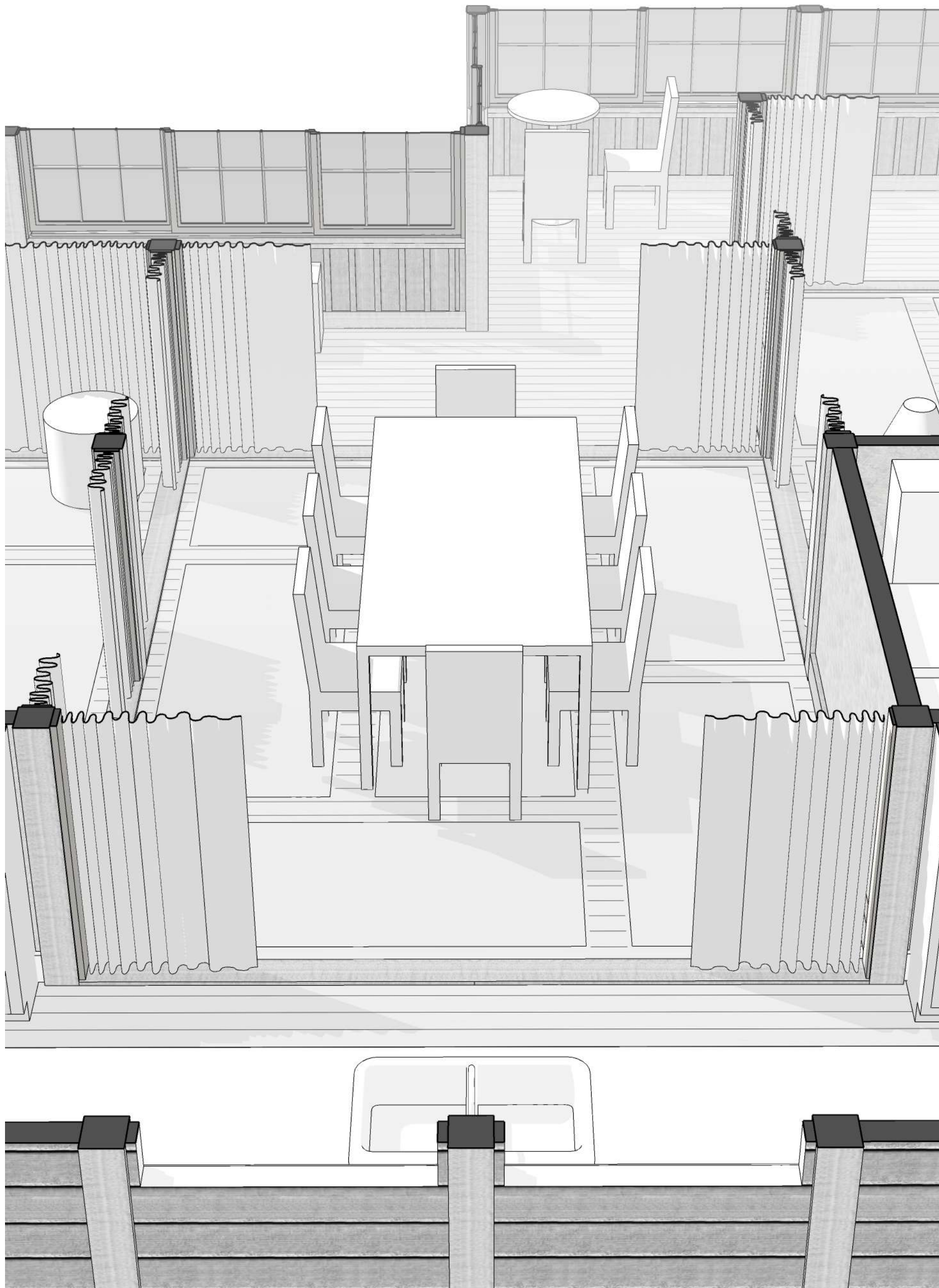
For the proportions to look right, it's important to have tall ceilings inside. The ceilings are about 10 feet high, and can transoms over the interior doors to improve the daylighting. Such high ceilings are another reason why this design would work best in hot climates. Cross breezes could pass through the house. The low roof eave ensures the porch still can be used during stormy weather.



Here are some detailed views showing the shoji panels– the sliding doors that are traditionally rice-based in Japanese architecture, but could also be built with fogged glass. They provide soft, balanced lighting throughout the house, and give the option of opening all the doors for a free flow of spaces. They also allow for more choices for the space, like increased privacy or versatility of functions.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
OPTIONS A & B
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

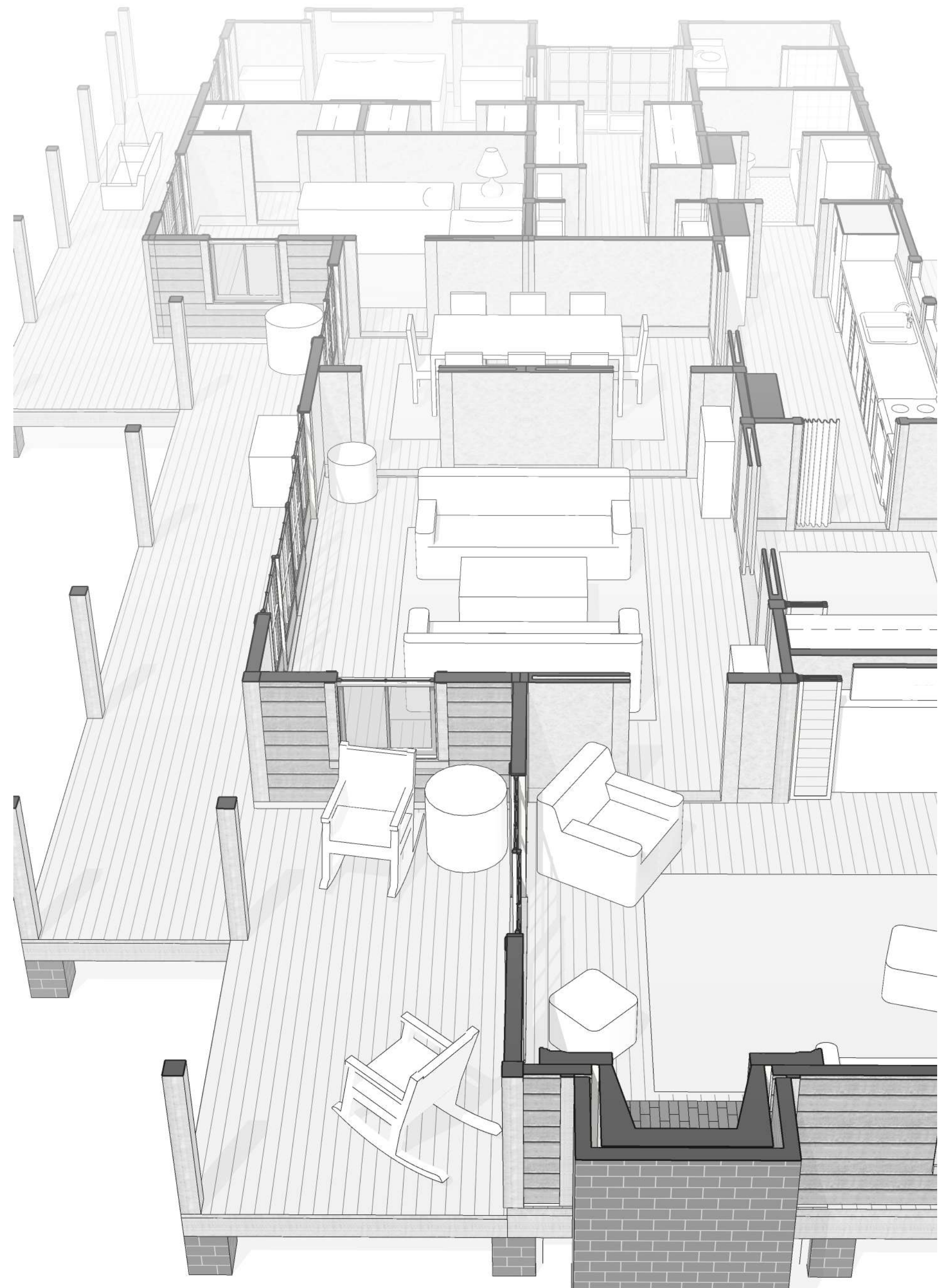
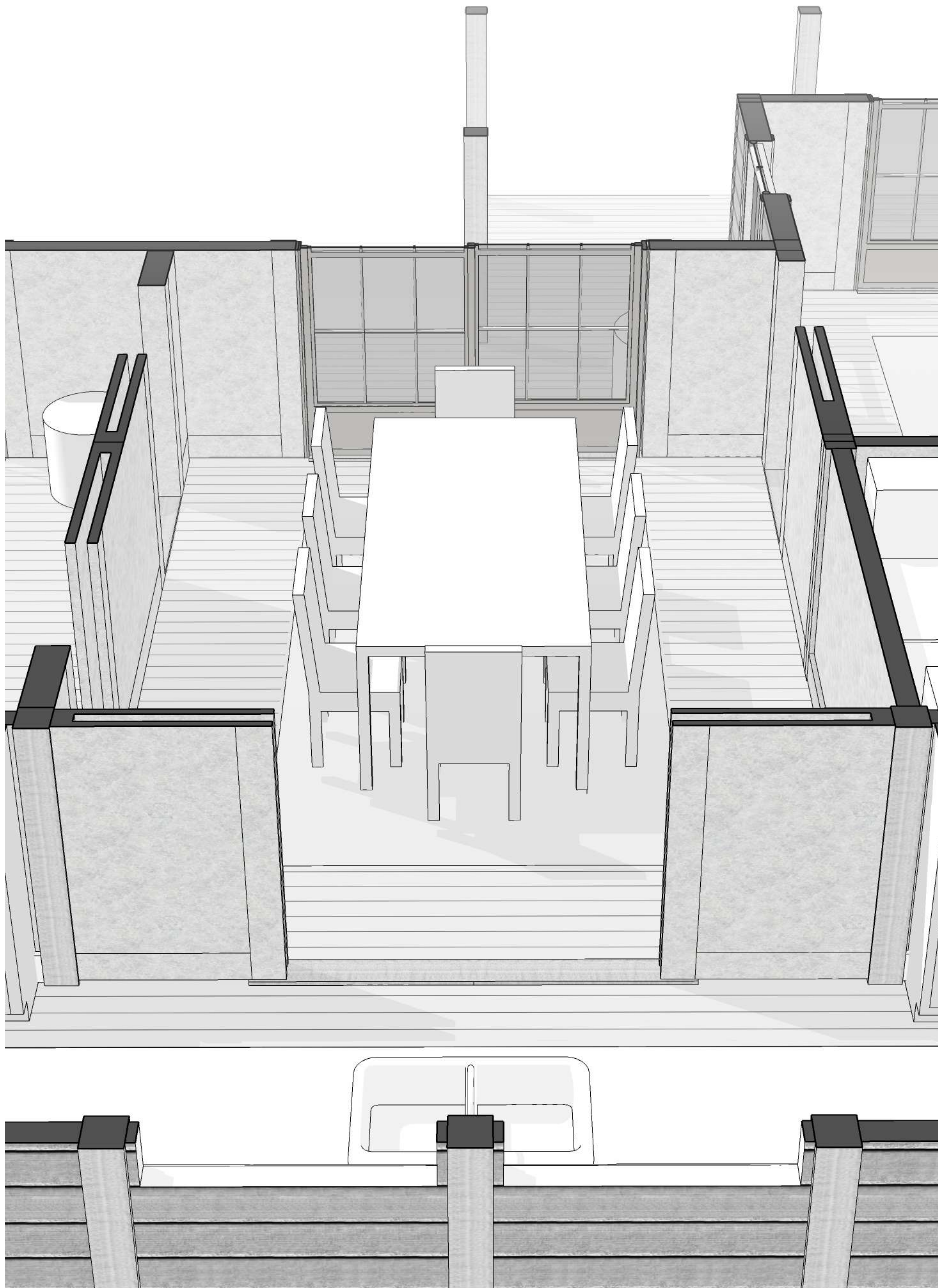
To start fusing the idea of an American house within this framework, I used axial views, furniture, and a fireplace. Still, this option retains more of a Japanese character than an American one. This was just the first step in creating a series of ideas that gradually morph one type of architecture into another, letting me study hidden similarities and irreconcilable differences between these houses.



As a next step in morphing a Japanese traditional house into an American one, I considered the idea of using curtains instead of sliding panels. The thought of billowing curtains throughout a living space has an appeal to me, and I also liked the idea of different levels of privacy in each space. With curtains, the inhabitants have more potential for personal expression. The area rugs allude to tatami mats.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
OPTION C VIEWS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

The glass porch is essential for this idea. The curtains only work in a conditioned space. The porch requires more depth than an engawa, so it can have furniture, rather than only function for hall circulation. The curtains could be completely open, or even omitted for a free flow between all the rooms in the house. Though inexpensive to build with, curtains will require additional maintenance.



In the final transformation, the house reaches a state of being more American than Japanese. With pocket doors, some conventional windows, and an open, wrap-around porch, it appears to belong in the US, Canada, or even Australia. It would work best in a warm climate because its outstretched form increases the surface area (thermal envelope). The openings are perfect for cross-ventilation.

GAIJIN STYLE HOUSE
OPTION D VIEWS
 A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

This variation has more wall area for furniture and artwork— and a psychologically reassuring backing to many of the chairs. The pocket doors can be omitted in many places, but do allow for rooms to hold more functions. Some openings frame views across the house, or outward to the landscape. The possibilities stretch further from here. Decisions reduce options, but the details give more.